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THE CONCEPT OF “CALLING” AND ITS RELEVANCE TO
THE MILITARY PROFESSIONAL

by

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Preface

I have been fascinated with the topic of “calling” for more than two decades, and have often been found “interviewing” people regarding how they came to be involved in their line of work. In this report, I will describe what is meant by “calling” (or vocation) and why this concept is relevant to the military professional. In recent years, through mentoring relationships and personal study, I have learned that “calling” involves much more than one’s occupation. I have also learned that since God is the Caller, and “His thoughts are not our thoughts, nor His ways our ways,” there will always be an element of mystery in calling—and hence the need for faith in contemplating the “way ahead.” In a similar vein, there are entire books on this topic, and institutes devoted to its study, so I do not remotely pretend to supply “all the answers” in this report. Nonetheless, I believe my contribution will be helpful as military professionals reflect on the reasons for their service. I am convinced that a better understanding of the concept of calling will have profound implications in the life of the military professional.

In exploring this topic, and my own callings, I have had many helpful guides and companions. I am deeply indebted to Jerry White (Maj Gen, USAFR, ret) and Paul Stanley of the Navigators for many insightful discussions and materials. Gary Barkalow of the Ransomed Heart ministry taught me a great deal about this subject. Professor Don Snider (Col, USA, ret) directed me to recent research on professions. I am also thankful that Ch (Lt Col) Paul Sherouse offered RS 646, “Religious Influences on Leadership.” MAJ James Dooghan (USA), my RS 646 classmate, offered helpful suggestions on my drafts. I dedicate this work to Jesus Christ, my loving family, other friends who have clarified my thinking on this subject, and you, the reader.

Abstract

Americans are vigorously seeking to understand their purpose in life—that is, to answer the question, “What on earth am I here for?” Theologians are using the concept of calling (also known as vocation) to provide answers to this question. Senior military leaders have recently used the word “calling” in various venues to describe the profession of arms. This study summarizes biblical teaching, historical foundations, and current research in explaining the concept of calling and its relevance to the military professional of the 21st century. The report first distinguishes between several terms often substituted for “calling” and summarizes the historical and current understanding of this concept. The process of discovering one’s calling is then discussed. The uniqueness of the military calling is then described, and several personal and professional implications are offered. The study concludes that calling is much more than “being involved in something bigger than yourself”—it is an all-encompassing perspective that can have profound, enriching effects on all facets of a military professional’s life.

Introduction

Before I made you in your mother's womb, I chose you. Before you were born, I set you apart for a special work.

—Jeremiah 1:5, NCV

At a recent ceremony in which an Air Force colonel was promoted to the rank of brigadier general, the presiding four-star general remarked, “this is not about more pay—it’s a calling—the chance to be involved in something bigger than oneself.” The flag officer guest speaker at a service’s birthday ball stated, “Of all the various professions, the military is most similar to the clergy, because it’s a calling—it’s not just a job.” The feature article in a recent *Airman* magazine is titled, “His Calling: Chief of Staff Leads the Way in Transformation.”¹ The wife of the late astronaut Colonel Rick Husband entitled his biography, *High Calling*.² But what exactly is a “calling?” More importantly, why should the concept of calling matter to the military professional of today?

Military professionals and civilians share the human need for a sense of purpose—indeed, of calling—to understand that what they do with their life truly matters. The recent *New York Times* #1 best-seller status of Rick Warren’s *Purpose-Driven Life* and the ensuing sweep of “40 Days of Purpose” campaigns across America testify to this need. Warren’s fall 2004 appearance at a massive Pentagon gathering, a camouflage version of *Purpose-Driven Life*, and “40 Days of Purpose” events at military chapels indicate that military professionals mirror society in this regard. Christian theologians are attempting to meet the groundswell of interest in “purpose” by dusting off the doctrine of calling (also known as vocation). Numerous books and

articles have been written on this subject in the past decade—many of which are referenced in this paper—attempting to remove the veil of confusion that has surrounded and continues to surround this topic. Many military professionals and civilians alike, for example, feel that their “line of work” is “second rate”—that only members of the clergy are “called.” Perhaps even more common is the “workaholism” that typifies those who attempt to satisfy their deepest longings by relentlessly pursuing the next “rung on the ladder.” In addition to these misconceptions of vocation, military professionals grapple with how periodic re-assignment—sometimes to billets outside their area of expertise—fits into some “bigger picture.” This struggle intensifies when they face retirement or involuntary separation.

The purpose of this paper is to describe the concept of calling and its relevance to the military professional of the 21st century, preparing to “fight the next war”—especially to the vast majority of American officers who identify themselves as Christians. To achieve this purpose, the paper is organized as follows. The first section begins by defining various terms often used interchangeably with “calling,” and explains that calling is much more than the nebulous notion of “being involved with something larger than oneself”—there is a spiritual basis that must not be overlooked. The section continues by tracing the biblical and historical foundations of the concept of calling, highlighting the impact of the Protestant Reformation. With a firm grasp of this background material, the second section describes how one “discovers” their calling. The third section verifies that the military profession is indeed a calling—in fact, a calling unlike any other. The fourth section examines how viewing one’s military service from the standpoint of calling can have profound enriching effects—both personal and professional—especially for commanders and supervisors. The paper concludes with a summary of its major developments and a list of opportunities for further study.

Definitions and Historical Development

For you are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

—Ephesians 2:10, NIV

To the “man on the street,” the word “calling” conveys some blend of the two senses given in typical dictionaries: on the one hand, “a profession or occupation;” on the other hand, “a spiritual summons or impulse to accomplish something.” This blend is often expressed as “being involved in something bigger than oneself.” Also, many frequently equate calling with “career” or “job,” but these words do not fully capture the depth and breadth of calling. To clarify these and other common misconceptions, this section begins by defining key terms that will be used throughout the remainder of the paper, thereby illustrating what calling is and is not. The section then summarizes the development and distortion of the concept of calling from biblical and classical times up to the present day, including discussions of the medieval and Reformation eras.

Definitions

Numerous terms are often used interchangeably with “calling” in contemporary society, but only one is truly equivalent. Dr. R. Paul Stevens, professor of applied theology at Regent College in Vancouver, BC, explains that the word *vocation* is based on the Latin *vocatio*, meaning “calling.” “They are the same thing,” he says, “though this is not obvious to the people who use these words.”³ As such, the words *calling* and *vocation* will be used synonymously in

this paper. Dr. Gene Veith, author of *God at Work* and founder of the Cranach Institute, an organization devoted to the study of calling, notes that in today's society, "vocation" has become synonymous with "job," as in "vocational training."⁴ Dr. Douglas Schuurman, professor of religion at St. Olaf College in Northfield, MN explains that calling is much more than work: "God not only calls people into a given form of paid work; family relations, friendships, extracurricular commitments—indeed, all significant social relations are places into which God calls us to serve God and neighbor."⁵ Dr. Shirley Roels, co-author of *Business Through the Eyes of Faith* and an academic dean at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, MI explains further that "Vocation implies a relationship with the one who calls us. Biblically, that caller is the triune God."⁶ Dr. Os Guinness, internationally renowned speaker and Senior Fellow of the Trinity Forum, emphatically states, "there can be no calling without a Caller."⁷ In his classic *The Call*, Guinness defines the overarching concept of calling as "the truth that God calls us to himself so decisively that everything we are, everything we do, and everything we have is invested with a special devotion, dynamism, and direction lived out as a response to his summons and service."⁸

There are key differences between "calling" as defined above and other related terms. The *American Heritage Dictionary* defines "occupation" as "an activity that serves as one's regular source of livelihood."⁹ Stevens explains how calling differs from "career" and "job:" "A career is an occupation for which people train and in which people expect to earn their living for most of their working years. A calling is the summons of God to live our whole lives for his glory; a career is part of that but not the whole. A job is work that is simple toil out of necessity."¹⁰ As an example, he notes Joseph had a career as a shepherd, a job as Potiphar's slave, and a calling to be used by God to save the nations of Israel and Egypt. Current researchers define "profession" as "a relatively 'high status' occupation whose members apply

abstract knowledge in a particular field of endeavor.”¹¹ As such, professions are identified by their expertise and the “jurisdiction” in which they apply that expertise.¹²

Calling in the Bible

Os Guinness describes what he calls “four essential strands” of calling in the Bible. First, he explains, calling has a straightforward meaning and a relational setting in the Old Testament as when “you ‘call’ someone on the phone, you catch someone’s ear for a season.”¹³ Second, “to call” in the Old Testament means “to name, and to name means to call into being;” as such, “calling is not only a matter of being and doing what we are but also of becoming what we are not yet but are called by God to be.”¹⁴ Schuurman explains how these two strands are related: “in the Bible, one’s name frequently sums up the divinely given purpose or identity to which God calls that person.”¹⁵ Third, calling in the New Testament is virtually synonymous with salvation: “God’s calling people to Himself as followers of Christ.”¹⁶ Guinness notes that *ecclesia*, the Greek word for church, means “called-out ones.”¹⁷ Fourth, calling in the New Testament means to live under the lordship of Christ: “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men.”¹⁸

The last two strands of the biblical meaning of calling, Guinness explains, are the basis for what theologians later referred to as the “primary” (or “general”) calling and “secondary” (or “specific”) callings. “First and foremost,” he says, “we are called to Someone (God);” then, we are called to “something (such as motherhood, politics, or teaching) or to somewhere (such as the inner city or Outer Mongolia).”¹⁹ That is, one’s primary calling is to *be* God’s own; their secondary callings (note plural) include everything they *do* in response to their primary calling. The remainder of this paper will focus on secondary callings, though by no means intending to minimize the importance of the primary calling. Schuurman explains that the Bible refers to

God's general calling much more frequently than his specific callings.²⁰ Nonetheless, the Bible contains many examples of God calling individuals to specific tasks. For example, God personally called someone to craft sacred items for the Hebrew Tabernacle: "I have called by name Bezalel ... and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship, to devise artistic designs."²¹ The ninth chapter of the New Testament book of Acts describes Saul's primary calling and his secondary calling to take the Gospel to the Gentiles. Schuurman describes many other instances where God calls individuals to serve His people in specific ways.²² He then exegetes several passages to demonstrate that the Bible also validates secondary callings outside the context of Israel or the Church, concluding that "all defining spheres of social life are ... 'callings' assigned by the providence of God."²³

Calling in the Classical and Medieval Eras

While the biblical perspective emphasizes "being" (God's own) as the basis for "doing" (everything for God's glory), the Greek mindset lies in stark contrast. Nonetheless, calling was not completely ignored in the classical era. Gilbert Meilaender, Professor of Christian Ethics at Valparaiso University in Valparaiso, IN, contends that since the word "vocation" is derived from Latin, the concept has "other important roots in Western culture."²⁴ In his article "Divine Summons," for example, he argues that Vergil's *Aeneid* is "among other things, a poem about vocation." Aeneas, destined to found Rome, is "the man / Whom heaven calls."²⁵ But viewing one's life work as a response to a divine summons was the exception, not the norm, in Vergil's day and age. Adriano Tilgher notes that "to the Greeks, work was a curse and nothing else."²⁶ Dr. Lee Hardy, professor of philosophy at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, MI explains: work was simply a requirement for survival, part of the "endless cycle of activity forced upon us by embodied existence."²⁷ The Greeks carried this idea a step further, thereby initiating a duality

that still informs contemporary thinking: a life of leisure philosophizing was seen as the highest good for man, the “rational animal,” while practical, physical activities were seen as “impediments” to thinking.²⁸

Greek dualism continued to wield its influence by dividing the world into vocational “haves” and “have nots.” In A.D. 312, Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea, argued that there were two ways of life: the “perfect” and the “permitted.” The former was spiritual and contemplative and “reserved for priests, monks, and nuns,” the latter was secular and “open to such tasks as soldiering, governing, farming, trading, and raising families.”²⁹ Later theologians including Augustine and Thomas Aquinas also relegated the “active life (*viva activa*)” to second place behind the “contemplative life (*viva contemplativa*).”³⁰ Having a calling during the Middle Ages, Veith explains, meant being a priest, monk, or nun; “the ordinary occupations of life—being a peasant farmer or kitchen maid, making tools or clothing, being a soldier or even king—were acknowledged as necessary but worldly.... Even marriage and parenthood ... were seen as encumbrances to the religious life.”³¹

The Impact of the Reformation on the Concept of Calling

The Reformers, led primarily by Martin Luther and John Calvin in 16th century Europe, debunked the monastic “the best and the rest” view of vocation and broadened the concept from the Catholic emphasis on spiritual activities. The Reformation arose because such men were convinced that the Church had slipped from its scriptural foundations. Luther vigorously opposed the prevailing ecclesiastical misunderstanding that “in order to serve God fully, a person should leave his or her previous way of life and become a member of the priesthood.”³² Reformers did not lessen the importance of clerics, but taught that the vocations of “lay people” also had their own holy “responsibilities, authority, and blessings,” says Veith.³³ Their teaching,

Schuurman explains, “rejected the church/world dichotomy prevalent in their day; indeed, they saw an inherent dignity in everyday activities.”³⁴ Veith elaborates on the Reformers’ extension of the ecclesiastical concept of calling: “Luther goes so far as to say that vocation is a mask of God. That is, God hides Himself in the workplace, the family, the Church, and the seemingly secular society. To speak of God being hidden is a way of describing His presence, as when a child hiding in the room is there, just not seen.”³⁵ From this perspective, then, God provides healing *through* those in the medical field, teaching through pastors and educators, protection *through* the military and police forces, pleasure *through* musicians and artists, and so on.³⁶

Calling in Modern Times

In the centuries since the Reformation, the concept of calling gradually faded as the secularist worldview gained prominence. In fact, Stevens characterizes the present day as a “post-vocational society.”³⁷ Roels laments, “Sadly, Luther’s and Calvin’s vision ... lost primacy in the centuries that followed.”³⁸ Their teaching on “divinely derived vocation,” Roels explains, was eclipsed by the concept of “career.” The word “career,” she elaborates, gradually transformed in meaning from its Latin origin of a “course for chariots” to the French for “giving the horse ... an open field in which [it] could run freely” to, analogously, “self-chosen occupations for which people trained and progressed on their own initiative.”³⁹ One reason for the marginalization of vocation is that the modern worldview escorted the Caller off the stage of everyday life. Veith states, “One of the consequences of ‘modernity,’ that secularizing frame of mind that has been dominant in the culture from the Enlightenment to the last century, has been to drain any trace of God—even any trace of meaning—from the objective world.”⁴⁰ “Certainly,” he admits, “the Enlightenment explained how rainclouds form, but it is still God who makes it rain. He works through means—the natural processes—that He created.”⁴¹ In this

period, God's work "in the so-called secular world" through the means of vocation was largely forgotten; people "went about their worldly occupations but did not see them as being related to ... their faith."⁴² Another reason for the loss of a sense of vocation, Schuurman adds, is the "market mentality:" the habit of perceiving everything in terms of economic advance and personal well-being has likewise displaced the religious centers of valuation and perception."⁴³

The concept of calling has largely faded over the last several centuries, but imperfect remnants remain. Guinness describes the "Catholic distortion" and the "Protestant distortion;" Stevens discusses "the secular misunderstanding," a close relative of the latter. "Whereas the Catholic distortion is a spiritual form of dualism, elevating the spiritual at the expense of the secular, the Protestant distortion is a secular form of dualism, elevating the secular at the expense of the spiritual."⁴⁴ As such, those who tend to feel clerics are "called" while they themselves are not have fallen prey to the Catholic distortion; those who idolize their work have fallen prey to the Protestant distortion. The secularist misunderstanding, Stevens explains, reduces a calling to "the occupation one chooses."⁴⁵ In light of society's orientation toward the pursuit of self-fulfilling careers, he says "the recovery of biblical vocation is desperately needed."⁴⁶

Summary

This section began by defining key terms that will be used in the paper. Components of the biblical concept of calling were then described, and examples of "call stories" from the Bible were given. Aeneas' "call" was then contrasted against the dualistic Greek view of work. The monastic notion of vocational "haves and have nots" was then developed, followed by a description of the Reformers' attempts to liberate the laity. The section concluded by describing the effect of secularization and two religious "distortions" on calling. The next section builds on this foundation and describes how one "discovers" their calling.

The Process of “Discovering” One’s Calling

It is the first of all problems for a man to find out what kind of work he is to do in this universe.

—Thomas Carlyle, Scottish philosopher (1795-1881)

“Grownups” frequently ask children, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” Someone recently quipped that adults ask this question because they are looking for good ideas! But this question is not unique to adult-child conversations. Writer Cliff Fadiman bemoans, “For most men life is a search for the proper manila envelope in which to get themselves filed.”⁴⁷ In military circles, similar sentiments are often expressed, especially by mid-career officers or those nearing retirement: “some day, I’ll figure out what I want to be when I grow up.” This section begins by contrasting the secular concept of “choosing an occupation” with the biblical concept of calling. The section continues by describing how internal “clues” and external influences can help people discern their secondary calling in the workplace. Finally, the section gives several examples of how callings are confirmed in everyday experience.

Choosing, or Calling?

The secular and biblical worldviews address the quest for purpose in very different ways: as noted earlier, the former encourages people to select a self-fulfilling career; the latter challenges people to discern and embrace their God-given callings. Writer Jo McGowan notes that people typically consider salary, hours, perks, and benefits in choosing a self-fulfilling career; she cautions that these factors are practical, but do not “... guarantee job satisfaction. It

is one of those strange ironies of life that the more carefully we look out for our own interests, the less likely it is that our interests will be served.”⁴⁸ Veith notes that “despite what our culture leads us to believe ... we do not choose our vocations. We are called to them. There is a big difference.”⁴⁹ Veith says he can “choose” to be a pro athlete or an aeronautical engineer—but if he does not have the ability, and no one drafts or hires him, his “choice” makes no difference.⁵⁰ As such, one must consider other influences when attempting to discern a calling.

Internal Clues to Calling

There are many internal “clues” that help reveal one’s callings. Schuurman admits that while the New Testament does not give a “formula” for discerning God’s callings, assessing one’s gifts and abilities is a critical component of the process.⁵¹ Veith agrees, noting that in part, calling is related to “finding your God-given talents (what you can do),” but it is also important to consider “your God-given personality (what fits the person you are).”⁵² Consider two college students who choose to major in nursing. One cannot handle the biology courses; the other sails through the coursework and is hired by a major hospital after passing her nursing board exams, but absolutely hates the work. Since nursing does not match the talents of the first student, and it does not match the personality of the second, nursing is not their calling. By considering the calling of Saul the Pharisee, Schuurman explains that a Christian’s assessment of their spiritual gifts is important, but “an individual’s natural gifts and existing relations” (e.g., Saul’s intelligence, passion, grasp of the Hebrew Scriptures, standing as a Pharisee, etc.) also inform their callings in society and the Church.⁵³ The desires of a person’s heart can also help reveal God’s call. Author and speaker John Eldredge advises people to ask, “What is written in your heart?” and “What makes you come alive?” because “a man’s calling is written on his true heart, and he discovers it when he enters the frontier of his deep desires.”⁵⁴ Veith admits that while

vocation is partially a function of one's makeup, "we cannot know our vocation purely by looking inside ourselves."⁵⁵ Thus, external factors must also be considered.

External Influences on Calling

Numerous external factors join forces to influence our callings. In response to the popular misconception that God only summons people to specific callings in extraordinary ways, Schuurman cautions, "God rarely speaks directly to a human being from the heavenly throne or a burning bush ... particular callings are mediated."⁵⁶ That is, says Veith "Since God works through means, He often extends His call through other people, by means of their vocations."⁵⁷ Elizabeth Jeffries, professional speaker and author of *The Heart of Leadership*, affirms that "God speaks to us in many ways ... through other people, through prayer, through writing, through meditation, and through simply hearing the right thing at the right moment."⁵⁸ Jeffries also encourages openness to ideas, noting that reading a Herman Hesse novel paved the way for Robert Greenleaf's calling to inspire the servant-leadership movement.⁵⁹ Perceiving needs is also part of the process, says Schuurman; when one recognizes a need and "has the abilities for attending to it, that need becomes a spark of God's calling to him."⁶⁰ Veith discusses other external factors, such as "doors opening and slamming" (i.e., opportunities and circumstances beyond one's control) and hiring authorities, noting one's callings are "literally, in the hands of others."⁶¹ Additionally, Paul Keim, academic dean at Goshen College in Goshen, IN affirms the importance of mentors in discerning our calling, citing the biblical examples of Eli helping Samuel discern God's call, and Philip similarly helping Nathanael.⁶²

Evidences of Calling

Just as callings are revealed by internal and external means, callings are also internally and externally confirmed. William Frame, president of Augsburg College in Minneapolis, MN

notes that “the most immediately distinguishing aspect of vocation is that of being drawn to an undertaking with a deep sense that ‘this is the right work for me!’”⁶³ Jo McGowan describes the confirmation of her calling to run a school for mentally handicapped children by saying “There is nothing I would rather be doing. I believe that I have discovered the purpose of my existence on earth and I can’t imagine a more satisfying situation.”⁶⁴ Calling is confirmed “from the outside” as well. When Elizabeth Jeffries met an elderly clock repairman after one of her speaking engagements, his calling was evident to her because of his enthusiasm for his work and his “peaceful and centered” demeanor.⁶⁵ Sometimes, one can look back and see how God confirmed His call. In describing the sequence of events before and after his calling to found the American Leadership Forum, Joseph Jaworski says “I was experiencing the power of commitment to a higher purpose, discovering what the members of the Scottish Himalayan Expedition discovered—that ‘the moment one definitely commits oneself, then Providence moves too All sorts of things occur to help one that would otherwise never have occurred.’”⁶⁶

Summary

This section first examined the key difference between the secular and biblical worldviews with respect to work. The former champions career choice; the latter acknowledges a Caller who invites individuals to play their part in His “larger story.” Next, the section explained how internal “clues” (including special abilities and personality) help one discern their calling. The section then examined external influences on calling, including circumstances and decisions made by people in positions of authority. Finally, the section gave examples of how calling is confirmed—in sum, “you’ll know it, and others will too!” The next section will explore why the military profession is a calling unlike any other.

The Military Profession: A Unique Calling

The war criminal, the aggressor, the practitioner of genocide and the terrorist are not fading from the scene. In such a world, only the presence of effective military forces makes possible the maintenance of relative peace and security in international politics. Voluntary service in support of that relative peace is a self-sacrificial Christian calling.

—Martin L. Cook

“Why don’t you consider the military? It’s more than a job—it’s an honorable profession that would help you develop discipline, get you started on saving for college, and give you an opportunity to get involved in something bigger than yourself—serving your country—like your grandfather and I did.” So begins one of many similar conversations between fathers and their high school junior or senior in search of a “way ahead” for their life. This section will probe deep into what lies behind many similar conversations. In particular, the section first reviews recent assertions that military service is becoming “just a job.” Next, the section affirms that the military profession is indeed a calling. The section then goes one step further and demonstrates that military service is a calling unlike any other.

Just Another Job?

In recent decades, experts contended that the profession of arms was in the process of slipping from its status as a calling down to the ranks of occupations. In the late 1970s, for example, military sociologist Dr. Charles Moskos noted that actual and potential members of the military, like those in unionized jobs, seemed to be more concerned about extrinsic motivators than service.⁶⁷ Then Air Force Chief of Staff General David C. Jones admitted,

The military way of life and a military career traditionally have been regarded by our society as a calling. The calling was buttressed by the value embodied in “duty, honor, country” and a life style where the institution, with the support of society, took care of its own. Yet we are seeing a fundamental shift in the motivational bases of the military system away from a calling toward an occupation—“just another job”—where the first priority readily could become self interest rather than the organization and the job to be done.⁶⁸

Nevertheless, Jones affirmed that the Air Force is “much more than just another occupational choice in the job market. *It is a way of life.*”⁶⁹ He challenged recruiters to base their appeals not on monetary incentives, but on a higher sense of values manifest in the devotion and professionalism of Air Force people.”⁷⁰ During this era, Gary Hinkle (Major, USAF) wrote an ACSC research paper that examined this question: “Is the military profession a calling in the traditional sense, or is it becoming just an occupation?” By “calling in the traditional sense,” Hinkle meant a “profession of the highest sort,” and used Moskos’ definition of a calling as a profession that “transcends self-interest and is associated with the ideals of self-sacrifice and dedication.”⁷¹ His study concluded that “while occupational trends are evident, these trends are limited due to the nature of the military mission and do not change the distinctive nature of military life substantially.”⁷² It should be noted that Hinkle’s study did not emphasize the spiritual basis for the concept of calling.

Despite Hinkle’s conclusion, evidences of a “professional to occupational slip” continued to appear. In 1994, retired Canadian Forces chaplain Arthur Gans claimed that in the modern military, “the idea of service has disappeared as the occupational model has taken over.”⁷³ Gans claimed that a key reason for this shift was the “what’s in it for me” mentality.⁷⁴ Naval surface warfare officer (SWO) LT CDR Gregory Zacharski agrees: “judging by the way the naval profession is marketed, material benefits seem to be the primary motivators. The Navy should put far more emphasis on the less tangible, more intrinsic motivators.”⁷⁵ In his award-winning

essay entitled “It’s More than a Trade,” LT Thomas R. Williams II, another SWO, takes a slightly different tack, focusing not on those considering the profession, but on those who are already members. He attributes the Navy’s problems with retaining junior officers to the gap between their perception and the reality of their profession: the current trend is to concentrate more on “technical and functional expertise at the expense of the more intangible concepts of what it means to be a professional.”⁷⁶ In other words, junior officers tend to lose sight of the “forest” for the “trees;” the real reason for their service gets overshadowed by the myriad technical details of mastering their weapon systems and bureaucratic procedures. The project directors of the landmark anthology *The Future of the Army Profession* (2002) made similar observations regarding the pre-9/11 Army: “the Army’s bureaucratic nature outweighs and compromises its professional nature ... in practice [and] in the minds of the officer corps.”⁷⁷ The author suspects similar tendencies in the Air Force, due to the amount of time and effort it takes to master this service’s highly technical systems; this is a topic for further study.

The Military Profession as a Calling

While these recent tendencies of “drifting toward an occupation” (or bureaucracy) are troublesome, there is ample evidence that the military way of life remains a calling. In fact, in explaining their criteria for a profession, prominent military historians have used the language of calling. One of Samuel Huntington’s criteria for a profession is “a sense of responsibility to something greater than the individual.”⁷⁸ Allan Millett describes a profession as “a lifelong calling by the practitioners, who identified themselves personally with their vocational subculture.”⁷⁹ Regarding Millett’s description, Lloyd Matthews (Col, USA ret), former editor of *Parameters*, the professional journal of the US Army War College, says “The key word here is ‘calling.’ On entering the Army, true professionals don’t simply ‘take a job.’ Instead, they

‘profess to a sacred calling,’ one that totally immerses them, along with their band of professional brethren, in a career dedicated to a single transcendent cause.”⁸⁰ Matthews says that if a military professional was asked what difference it made if their service was perceived as “a mere occupation,” they would reply:

The defense of this country is too important to be left in the hands of occupational timeservers. If the nation’s defenders are not members of a true higher calling and if that calling is not accorded the reverence of taxpayers and political leaders alike, then ... the soldier’s advice will come to be depreciated, the fighting forces and their leadership will be depleted of numbers and quality, and the security of this nation will fall into jeopardy.⁸¹

Matthews describes the military profession as a “*bona fide* calling, ranking shoulder to shoulder with the long-venerated fields of medicine, law, divinity and pedagogy.”⁸² In fact, he states, based on his analysis of history, “A fully legitimated military profession—skilled in the art of war so that our nation’s citizens may practice the art of peace—is a necessary precondition for the flowering of all other professions.”⁸³ In summary, the military profession certainly meshes with the secular understanding of a calling as a profession that has an air of transcendence—“something bigger than oneself.” The section next contends that an even stronger conclusion can be reached: when the military profession is evaluated in light of the biblical concept of calling, it comes forth as truly “a cut above the rest.”

A Calling Unlike Any Other

Military professionals have a calling unlike any other because of the depth of their commitment to service. Reformers taught that the purpose of each calling is “to love and serve one’s neighbor.”⁸⁴ It is therefore important to ask the question, Veith says, “that the teacher of the Law asked Jesus: ‘Who is my neighbor?’ ‘Who, in this relationship, am I called to love and serve?’”⁸⁵ From the biblical perspective of calling, military professionals are demonstrating love for their neighbors—the American people—by enabling them to live in peace. Millett says

professions also have “a service orientation in which loyalty to standards of competence and loyalty to clients’ needs are paramount.”⁸⁶ Matthews notes that the military professional’s clients “ultimately are the American people. Lacking military expertise themselves, they have collectively placed their solemn trust in his professional judgment, he being the guarantor of their freedom and security and the sworn upholder of the Constitution.”⁸⁷ Matthews amplifies this thought by noting that “altruistic service to clients is nowhere stronger and more in evidence than in the military, where the incentive of a day’s hardtack and the chance to be of use stand in stark contrast to the opportunities for enrichment offered by some of the other professions.”⁸⁸

The willingness to pay the ultimate price in serving their neighbors sets the military professionals’ calling in a class by itself. Jesus said, “Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.”⁸⁹ General Sir John Hackett summed up this notion in the “unlimited liability contract.” Chaplain Gans explains that when selfish people ask “what’s in it for me?” and receive the answer “possibly death, maiming, or imprisonment,” they find it hard to respond to “a call for sacrifice.... It is at this point that the difference between a job and a vocation becomes most apparent.”⁹⁰ Since members of the military profession “can be sent to die [in] ‘God awful’ places,” that is, because of their unlimited liability contract, they have “a sense of commitment deeper than that required ... in any other kind of work required in the civilian community.”⁹¹ One week before he and 27 of his men died in the Battle of Bull Run, Major Sullivan Ballou of the Second Rhode Island Volunteers wrote a love letter to his wife, using the language of calling to demonstrate the depth of his commitment, come what may:

I have sought most closely and diligently ... for a wrong motive in thus hazarding the happiness of those I loved and I could not find one. A pure love of my country and of the principles I have often advocated before the people and ‘the name of honor that I love more than I fear death’ have called upon me, and I have obeyed.... Our movement may be one of a few days duration and full of pleasure – and it may be one of severe conflict and death to me. Not my will, but thine O

God, be done. If it is necessary that I should fall on the battlefield for my country, I am ready. I have no misgivings about, or lack of confidence in, the cause in which I am engaged, and my courage does not halt or falter. I know how strongly American Civilization now leans upon the triumph of the Government, and how great a debt we owe to those who went before us through the blood and suffering of the Revolution. And I am willing – perfectly willing – to lay down all my joys in this life, to help maintain this Government, and to pay that debt.⁹²

Summary

Observers of the military have claimed in recent years that there has been a tendency for military professionals to focus more on extrinsic motivators (e.g., pay, quality of life) and the bureaucratic aspects of careers than on the intrinsic motivation inherent in calling. The section began by examining some of these claims. Then, the section examined evidence for the claim that the military profession can still be considered a calling in the secular sense. Finally, the section explained that because of their unlimited liability contract—because of their depth of commitment to serve their neighbor, even unto death, wherever, whenever, however—military professionals have a unique calling in the biblical sense.

Implications for the Military Professional

I go anywhere in the world they tell me to go, any time they tell me to ... I move my family anywhere they tell me to move, on a day's notice, and live in whatever quarters they assign me. I work whenever they tell me to work ... I don't belong to a union and I don't strike if I don't like what they're doing to me. And I like it. Maybe that's the difference.

—James Webb, *A Country Such as This*

Before reading this report, the reader, like most people, may have thought a calling was “something a priest had” or something “bigger than oneself.” Contrary to these notions, previous sections described calling as the means God uses to providentially care for people. Understanding this concept will have profound implications on the reader’s personal and professional life. This section will examine some of those implications. In particular, it will first explore how an understanding of calling will give military professionals—regardless of their career field or branch of service—a renewed sense of validation and satisfaction in their service. Second, the section will explain how the concept of calling can help the military professional “manage expectations.” Third, the section will explain how the all-encompassing concept of calling will enable the military professional to re-define “success.” Next, the section will describe how calling transforms the military professional’s view of leadership. Finally, the section will discuss key implications for the military professional’s “next step,” including future assignments, separation, or retirement.

A Sense of Validation and Satisfaction

Military professionals can experience a renewed sense of validation and satisfaction when they view their service from the biblical perspective of calling. Members of the military may intellectually understand the legitimacy of their profession (from their knowledge of biblical passages including Romans chapter 13, the writings of Augustine, Luther, and others, etc.), but in today's strategic environment, most have little time to reflect on the real impact of their service. On a given day, they can be found fulfilling their demanding everyday duties, learning new skill sets for increasingly technological weapons systems, preparing for or serving on yet another deployment, and always doing "more with less." Over the past decade, many junior and mid-grade officers have left the service after perceiving the lot of their contemporaries in other walks of life as more attractive than theirs (e.g., financially, quality of life, etc.). Still others have surmised that their service is less important compared to other professions, intimating thoughts like these to the author: "I'm wrestling with the decision to stay in or get out and attend seminary. Pastors are influencing their world—but here I am, dropping bombs on bad guys or pushing papers, doing stuff with no real impact."⁹³ But when military professionals ponder what was expressed in the last section—that God is enabling them to love and serve their fellow man by providing for their security and freedom—they will realize they are indeed making an impact. Martin L. Cook, professor of ethics at the US Army War College in Carlisle, PA, affirms the broader extent of their contribution: "In the contemporary geopolitical circumstance, service in the American military is, on balance, a force for relative good. That good is grounded in a balance of power and coercion, a balance that Reinhold Niebuhr argued is the closest approximation to justice and peace achievable in this world."⁹⁴ In his comments to US Central Command Airmen regarding their contributions in the war on terrorism and in the corresponding

humanitarian operations, USAF Chief of Staff Gen John Jumper, agrees: “What you’re doing is huge. It’s going to make a difference for the whole world.... every person should recognize (he or she is) part of a bigger picture.”⁹⁵

This sense of validation and satisfaction is not simply another “bonus” established only for military people—it is available to people in all legitimate callings. Veith acknowledges that “The promise of God’s word and the conviction that right now, where I am, I am in the station—the vocation—where God has placed me—those constitute the basis for confidence and certainty that God has assuredly placed me here and that He is faithful and that He, even though I cannot see Him, is at work in and through my life.”⁹⁶ He summarizes a discussion Luther had with a servant girl on similar matters: “if she can be made to realize the truth about vocation, she ‘would dance for joy and praise and thank God ... with her careful work, for which she receives sustenance and wages, she would obtain a treasure such as those who are regarded as the greatest saints do not have.’”⁹⁷

Realistic Expectations

While viewing one’s military service from the perspective of calling can indeed result in a renewed sense of validation and satisfaction, it does not logically follow that the “way ahead” will be trouble-free. From the standpoint of calling, difficulties are part of the equation—sometimes they are “signposts,” and other times they are not—but they are always under the sovereign control of God. Acknowledging the harsh realities of calling will give the military professional steadfastness during the inevitable “fog and friction” of serving the nation. Veith admits that the doctrine of vocation is “utterly realistic. And a part of realism is to acknowledge the hardships, the frustrations, the failures that we also sometimes encounter ... work can be satisfying and fulfilling, but—sometimes at the same time—it can be arduous, boring, and

futile.”⁹⁸ For example, he says, “Wise statesmen find themselves voted out of office. Noble generals lose the war. Workers lose their jobs.”⁹⁹ Gilbert Meilaender reviews the manifold tragedies experienced by Aeneas in the epic, and observes “A vocation exacts a price, and not all can pay it. Even though it may seem to draw us, its point is not happiness. It is, as C. S. Lewis notes, the nature of vocation to appear simultaneously both as desire and as duty. ‘To follow the vocation does not mean happiness; but once it has been heard, there is no happiness for those who do not follow.’”¹⁰⁰ Furthermore, Meilaender says,

Still more, there is sometimes backbreaking and dangerous labor, or tedious and boring work, that must be done if we or our loved ones are to live, but the language of vocation imbues such work with a kind of meaning and significance that may seem unbelievable to those who must actually do it. They work to live; they do not live to work. Taken seriously, the sanctification of such laborious or tedious work with the language of vocation would suggest that we should struggle to find more time for it, not plot ways to escape it.¹⁰¹

In summary, when a military professional experiences difficulties, it does not necessarily indicate that he or she has missed their calling—trials are normal. Jeffries explains that psychologist Dr. Abraham Maslow coined the term “Jonah Complex” to describe the “tendency within each of us to try to run away from our greatness, to not accept the challenge we hear calling us from within.”¹⁰² In the well-known biblical account, Jonah’s “deployment” experience, like many experienced by today’s military professionals, was far from comfortable. The apostle Paul’s missionary experiences also testify to the reality of trials in following one’s calling. Nonetheless, Veith cautions, some trials, such as getting fired for the inability to do a job proficiently, “may mean you are being called to something else.”¹⁰³

Transformed Leadership

Viewing one’s military service from the biblical perspective of calling can also help military professionals develop into servant leaders. Recall that the purpose of each calling is to

love and serve one's "neighbor," and that it is important to identify who the "neighbors" are for a given calling. The military professional has several sets of "neighbors." As noted above, they love and serve the American people whose security they ensure. They love and serve various people groups when they fight for their freedom. Closer to home, a military professional's subordinates are also "neighbors." The story in the Gospel of Matthew (chapter 8) of the centurion with the ailing servant exemplifies the heart of a servant leader. Veith notes that "instead of just using his position to lord it over his subordinates, he cared deeply and personally about the welfare of the servant under him, to the point of asking Jesus to heal him."¹⁰⁴

Military professionals of today may not experience such a "divine appointment" as the centurion's, but they can demonstrate a comparable attitude of service in many ways. Lloyd Matthews describes one way: a military professional holds the lives and welfare of their subordinates in their hands, but only risks them "to the minimum degree consistent with mission accomplishment."¹⁰⁵ Ken Blanchard describes another way: to "look beyond their own season of leadership and prepare the next generation of leaders."¹⁰⁶ Zacharski echoes Blanchard's comment, emphasizing the deep need for today's officers to instill in their subordinates the true meaning of "service."¹⁰⁷ Third, and related to the second, is to be an encourager. By understanding the concept of calling, the military professional grasps not only the importance of their own contribution, but also appreciates that of his or her subordinates. As such, they are prepared to affirm their subordinates and help them understand their callings when doubts and discouragement "check their stride." This list is by no means comprehensive. The author encourages the reader to "plumb the depths" of servant leadership literature for truths that can be applied to their particular situation. In that spirit, this section now explores other key concepts

that, when comprehended by the military professional, can further enhance their mentoring and servant leadership.

Redefining “Success”

Contemporary society measures success by the yardsticks of power, prestige, perks, and possessions, among others. The military, as a subset of society, has its own versions of these indicators. Military professionals tend to view those at the next rank as “more successful” than they are, and many measure their careers by their progression toward some ultimate rank (e.g., O-5, E-7, etc.) or by their selection for an important position (e.g., squadron command, first sergeant, etc.). But a military professional with an understanding of calling realizes that “success” is not equivalent to their pay grade or position—“success” means faithfulness in each of their God-given callings. The essence of this idea is found in an officer’s oath: “... I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office upon which I am about to enter, so help me God.” Recall that each person—and thus each military professional—has multiple callings. In addition to their calling to the workplace, people have callings in their families (e.g., spouse, parent, son-in-law, etc.), as citizens, and as members of a community of faith. From the standpoint of calling, success is measured by the degree to which a person is faithfully discharging the “duties” of these “offices.” As such, “success” from the standpoint of calling requires a certain degree of balance. Thus, a full colonel, viewed by her contemporaries as a “success,” can fail in her callings as wife and mother if she does not love and serve the “neighbors” in her family—her husband and children. On the flip side, a “passed over” major, viewed by his contemporaries as unsuccessful in pursuit of the next rank, is a success from the standpoint of calling if he is “faithfully discharging” his duties as an officer, father, husband, citizen, and church member. In summary, then, “success” from the standpoint of calling is

completely different from society's characterization. "Wealth, possessions, position, and all other marks of prestige mean less than nothing to God," reminds Veith.¹⁰⁸ The key is faithfully balancing one's efforts in each God-given calling.

Peace for the "Next Step"

Finally, viewing one's military service from the biblical perspective of calling will result in a deep sense of peace in the midst of many inevitable changes, including periodic re-assignments and eventual separation or retirement. Consider re-assignment. For military professionals and their families, it's simply a fact of life—roughly every two or three years, if not more often, they're going to have to "uproot" from one location and "plant" themselves in another. Of all the issues on the panorama of a military family's life, no issue seems to bring more anxiety and uncertainty than this one—but an understanding of calling can allay many of the typical worries and fears. Recall that calling is about how the "hidden" God is working out His plans in the lives of people. Thus, military professionals can confidently acknowledge God's work in leading them into the military and in directing their past, present, and future assignments. He has used supervisors and decision makers—acting in their callings on selection panels, assignment teams, and the like—to bring military professionals to their current assignment. Day to day, He continues to work through circumstances, known and unknown mentors, and many other means to accomplish His purposes through their current assignment. And He will continue to work through various means to place them exactly where He wants them for their development and future contributions.

This does not mean military professionals are to abstain from planning. "We are to plan in the here and now," says Veith, "but we can do so in the confidence that the Lord is acting in our lives and in our circumstances, calling us to His purpose."¹⁰⁹ In fact, he adds, while we

indeed make choices (e.g., the “dream sheet”), “looking back, it becomes clear that our choices were themselves part of the overarching design of God.”¹¹⁰ Recall that God also works through a person’s desires to lead them into their various callings. Thus, if a person is evaluating an opportunity and it is consistent with biblical guidance and his or her background, gifts, talents, desires, family situation, and mentor’s counsel, they can confidently pursue it, trusting that God will use “the powers that be” in their callings to make the possibility a reality or to direct him or her elsewhere. After all, “The king’s heart is in the hand of the LORD; he directs it like a watercourse wherever he pleases.”¹¹¹ In a related vein, there is no need to fret about the results of future promotion boards, for “No one from the east or the west ... can exalt a man. But it is God who judges: He brings one down, he exalts another.”¹¹² Summing up, then, military professional with a firm grasp of calling can experience a liberating peace in the assignment process. In all of the “shifting sands” of their changing assignments, they can stand firm: “The outcome belongs completely to the Lord. The burden is shifted over to Him.”¹¹³

Now consider retirement or separation from the military. Again, from the standpoint of calling, many of the concepts discussed above are applicable—God is sovereign, and uses various means to accomplish His purposes in His timing. But retirement or separation are different in many respects from periodic re-assignment. The former receive much more “attention,” as evidenced by the week-long “transition assistance programs” *vis-à-vis* the hour-long re-assignment briefings. As He does with each re-assignment, God will use the internal and external means discussed above to lead a person in this next phase of their life. One of the internal means is desire; many separating or retiring military personnel admit that they’re looking forward to finally being able to do more things they *want* to do as opposed to only things they *must* do. Note the tension between duty and desire—recall from above that there is an

element of each in calling. Likewise, He will work through the external means of other people in their callings to present opportunities to military personnel “in transition,” and similarly to interview and hire them. The key fact to realize is that after retiring and entering civilian life, a person still has multiple callings. While the location and type of their employment may change, they still bring their backgrounds, talents, and desires to bear in their family, community, church, and new workplace.

Summary

Building upon the theoretical foundation of earlier sections, this section explained how the “rubber” of calling meets the “road” of the military professional’s life. First, it explained how military personnel can experience a renewed sense of validation and satisfaction when they reflect on their service to various “neighbors.” Second, it explained that calling does not guarantee a “rose garden”—Jonah and Paul can testify to that—and thus made a case for realistic expectations. Third, it explained that a military professional’s subordinates are also “neighbors,” and suggested several ways to cultivate servant leadership. Fourth, the section contrasted society’s view of “success” with a view based on calling, namely that success is evidenced by faithfulness in one’s many callings. Finally, the section explained how a sense of calling can help replace the typical “gnashing of teeth” and “working the system” with a calm assurance as military professionals navigate the waters of various assignments en route to eventual retirement.

Conclusions

At a time when, according to the polls, people's major preoccupations are work and family, there has never been a greater need to recover the Christian doctrine of vocation.

—Gene Veith, *God at Work*

Americans are vigorously seeking to understand their purpose in life—that is, to answer the question, “What on earth am I here for?” Theologians are using the concept of “calling” (also known as vocation) to provide answers to this question. Senior military leaders have recently used the word “calling” in various venues to describe the profession of arms. The goal of this research is to explain what “calling” means and why it is relevant to today’s military professional. Based on a review of current literature, this paper first concludes that calling is not merely “being involved in *something* bigger than oneself.” The “something” is, in fact, *Someone*—the Caller, God, who sovereignly works through the means of people’s multiple vocations to providentially care for people. The biblical doctrine of calling views everything a Christian *does* in life (i.e., their secondary callings) as a response to *being* God’s own (their primary calling). The Reformers attempted to restore this all-encompassing aspect of calling, thereby making a quantum leap from the dualism of previous eras. Unfortunately, their sense of vocation has been all but lost in recent centuries. Nonetheless, God continues to use internal clues and numerous external factors to help people discern their callings—that is, specific ways they are to love and serve their neighbors—and uses internal and external means to confirm whether or not they are “on track.”

The study also concluded that because of the depth of commitment its “practitioners” have for their “clients,” the military profession is a calling unlike any other. Furthermore, viewing one’s military service from the biblical perspective of calling—namely, that God is enabling him or her to love and serve their fellow man by providing for their security and freedom—has profound personal and professional implications. These implications are even more profound when viewed against the backdrop of today’s strategic landscape. In particular, a sense of calling will result in renewed satisfaction and validation, realistic expectations, servant leadership, a balance-based definition of success, and calm assurance as the military professional navigates the waters of periodic reassignment and eventual retirement or separation.

During the course of this research, several opportunities for further study presented themselves. First, it would be interesting to interview a large number of current and former military professionals—representing all branches of service and as many “designators” as possible—to gain an understanding of why they entered the military and, as applicable, why they continue to serve or chose to separate or retire. Such a study would shed further light on how people discern a calling to the military, and may validate or suggest improvements to the way the military currently accesses personnel (e.g., the “vocational” aptitude battery, ROTC and service academy applications, etc.). Second, it would be interesting to investigate how a sense of calling impacts retention; the author suspects a direct relationship. If this is so, a strong case could be made for adding discussions of this topic to military education and training curricula. Third, a joint study similar to the aforementioned *The Future of the Army Profession* would benefit members of all services; as noted above, the author suspects many of this study’s conclusions are applicable to members of other services.

Notes

- ¹ Rick Burnham, "His Calling: Chief of Staff Leads the Way in Transformation," *Airman* 46, no. 10 (2002).
- ² Evelyn Husband and Donna VanLiere, *High Calling: The Courageous Life and Faith of Space Shuttle Columbia Commander Rick Husband* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2003).
- ³ R. Paul Stevens, "Calling," in *The Complete Book of Everyday Christianity*, ed. Robert Banks, and Stevens, R. Paul (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1997), 97.
- ⁴ Gene Edward Veith, Jr., *God at Work: Your Christian Vocation in All of Life* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2002), 16. Veith's treatment of this topic is based primarily on Luther's theology; in his preface, he describes the book as a summary for lay people of what he learned from Luther and Swedish theologian Gustav Wingren's *Luther on Vocation*.
- ⁵ Douglas J. Schuurman, *Vocation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), xi. Schuurman's treatment of this topic is much more academic than Veith's; he also compares Luther's teachings to Calvin's, and comments on the diversity among contemporary Christian theologians on the topic.
- ⁶ Shirley J. Roels, "The Christian Calling to Business Life," *Theology Today* 60, no. 3 (2003), 358.
- ⁷ Os Guinness, *The Call: Finding and Fulfilling the Central Purpose of Your Life* (Nashville, TN: W Publishing Group, 2003), ix. Guinness's classic book on calling is written as an in-depth devotional (complete with study guide), and also serves as an excellent reference manual on the subject.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, 29.
- ⁹ Pamela B. DeVinne, et al, ed., *American Heritage Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1985), 860.
- ¹⁰ Stevens, "Calling," 104.
- ¹¹ James Burk, "Expertise, Jurisdiction, and Legitimacy of the Military Profession," in *The Future of the Army Profession*, ed. Lloyd J. Matthews (Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill, 2002), 21.
- ¹² Don M. and Watkins Snider, Gayle L., "Introduction," in *The Future of the Army Profession*, ed. Lloyd J. Matthews (Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill, 2002), 7.
- ¹³ Guinness, *The Call: Finding and Fulfilling the Central Purpose of Your Life*, 29.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 29-30.
- ¹⁵ Schuurman, *Vocation*, 18.
- ¹⁶ Guinness, *The Call: Finding and Fulfilling the Central Purpose of Your Life*, 30.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁸ Colossians 3:23, NIV.
- ¹⁹ Guinness, *The Call: Finding and Fulfilling the Central Purpose of Your Life*, 31.
- ²⁰ Schuurman, *Vocation*, 17.
- ²¹ Exodus 31: 2-4, RSV.
- ²² Schuurman, *Vocation*, 31.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, 33-37.
- ²⁴ Gilbert Meilaender, "Divine Summons," *Christian Century* 117, no. 30 (2000), 1110.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*
- ²⁶ Quoted in Lee Hardy, *The Fabric of This World: Inquiries into Calling, Career Choice, and the Design of Human Work* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), 7.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, 11-16.
- ²⁹ Guinness, *The Call: Finding and Fulfilling the Central Purpose of Your Life*, 32.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, 33.
- ³¹ Veith, *God at Work: Your Christian Vocation in All of Life*, 18.
- ³² Stevens, "Calling," 98.
- ³³ Veith, *God at Work: Your Christian Vocation in All of Life*, 18.
- ³⁴ Schuurman, *Vocation*, 6.
- ³⁵ Veith, *God at Work: Your Christian Vocation in All of Life*, 24. Luther's concept of an active, "hidden" God should not be confused with the deistic concept of a "hands off" God.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*, 25.
- ³⁷ Stevens, "Calling," 98.
- ³⁸ Roels, "The Christian Calling to Business Life," 363.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*, 363-364.

- ⁴⁰ Veith, *God at Work: Your Christian Vocation in All of Life*, 26.
- ⁴¹ Ibid., 28.
- ⁴² Ibid., 28-30.
- ⁴³ Schuurman, *Vocation*, 9-10.
- ⁴⁴ Guinness, *The Call: Finding and Fulfilling the Central Purpose of Your Life*, 38.
- ⁴⁵ Stevens, "Calling," 97.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid., 98.
- ⁴⁷ Available from www.borntomotivate.com/Vocation.html.
- ⁴⁸ Jo McGowan, "Job, Career, Vocation: What Works for You?" *U. S. Catholic* 61, no. 9 (1996), 20.
- ⁴⁹ Veith, *God at Work: Your Christian Vocation in All of Life*, 50.
- ⁵⁰ Ibid., 52.
- ⁵¹ Schuurman, *Vocation*, 38. It is beyond the scope of this report to summarize the various means available for such 'self-assessment.' The author has found "motivating verbs" tests (closely related to "passion word" exercises) helpful in clarifying his personal callings.
- ⁵² Veith, *God at Work: Your Christian Vocation in All of Life*, 52-53.
- ⁵³ Schuurman, *Vocation*, 39.
- ⁵⁴ John Eldredge, *Wild at Heart* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 206. Scripture is fraught with warnings about the human heart. It is important to note that in this quote, Eldredge is talking about the redeemed heart, animated by the Holy Spirit and filled with desires that honor God.
- ⁵⁵ Veith, *God at Work: Your Christian Vocation in All of Life*, 54.
- ⁵⁶ Schuurman, *Vocation*, 37.
- ⁵⁷ Veith, *God at Work: Your Christian Vocation in All of Life*, 55.
- ⁵⁸ Elizabeth Jeffries, "Work as a Calling," in *Insights on Leadership*, ed. Larry C. Spears (New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, 1998), 33.
- ⁵⁹ Ibid., 32.
- ⁶⁰ Schuurman, *Vocation*, 39.
- ⁶¹ Veith, *God at Work: Your Christian Vocation in All of Life*, 54-58.
- ⁶² Paul Keim, "Call Me," *The Christian Century* 120, no. 1 (2003), 16.
- ⁶³ William V. Frame, "A President Looks Back 500 Years and Finds His Calling," *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 49, no. 2 (2002), B11.
- ⁶⁴ McGowan, "Job, Career, Vocation: What Works for You?", 20.
- ⁶⁵ Jeffries, "Work as a Calling," 29-30.
- ⁶⁶ Joseph Jaworski, "Destiny and the Leader," in *Insights on Leadership*, ed. Larry C. Spears (New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, 1998), 262.
- ⁶⁷ Charles C. Moskos, "The All-Volunteer Military: Calling, Profession, or Occupation?" *Parameters, Journal of the US Army War College* 7, no. 1 (1977).
- ⁶⁸ David C. Jones, "The Air Force Is a Way of Life," *Air Force Magazine* 60, no. 5 (1977), 49.
- ⁶⁹ Ibid., 51.
- ⁷⁰ Ibid.
- ⁷¹ Gary R. Hinkle and Air University (U.S.). Air Command and Staff College., *The Military Profession: Calling or Occupation?* (Maxwell AFB, AL: 1978), 9-10.
- ⁷² Ibid., ii.
- ⁷³ Arthur E. Gans, "Vocation or Job: A Warrior's Place in a Rights-Driven Society," *Canadian Defence Quarterly* 24, no. 2 (1994), 10.
- ⁷⁴ Ibid., 12.
- ⁷⁵ Gregory J. Zacharski, "Why Do We Serve?" *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings* 129, no. 2 (2003), 2.
- ⁷⁶ Thomas R. Williams, II, "It's More Than a Trade," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings* 126, no. 5 (2000), 38. This essay won the Navy's second Arleigh Burke essay contest.
- ⁷⁷ Don M. and Watkins Snider, Gayle L., "Project Conclusions," in *The Future of the Army Profession*, ed. Lloyd J. Matthews (Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill, 2002), 537.
- ⁷⁸ Williams, "It's More Than a Trade," 39.
- ⁷⁹ Allan R. Millett, "Military Professionalism and Officership in America," *Mershon Center Briefing Paper Number Two* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State Univ, 1977), 2.
- ⁸⁰ Lloyd J. Matthews, "Is the Military Profession Legitimate?" *Army* 44, no. 1 (1994), 21.
- ⁸¹ Ibid., 17.

- ⁸² Ibid., 15.
- ⁸³ Ibid., 23.
- ⁸⁴ Veith, *God at Work: Your Christian Vocation in All of Life*, 39-40.
- ⁸⁵ Ibid., 44.
- ⁸⁶ Matthews, "Is the Military Profession Legitimate?", 22.
- ⁸⁷ Ibid.
- ⁸⁸ Ibid.
- ⁸⁹ John 15: 13, NIV.
- ⁹⁰ Gans, "Vocation or Job: A Warrior's Place in a Rights-Driven Society," 12.
- ⁹¹ Ibid., 11.
- ⁹² Available from <http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/infousa/facts/democrac/23.htm>.
- ⁹³ This is not to say that God cannot call military professionals out of the service and into the pastorate. Some have even come "full circle:" several current active duty chaplains, including the USAF Chief of Chaplains, Maj Gen Baldwin, served in the military before "temporarily" separating to complete seminary and the pastoral requirements for chaplain candidacy.
- ⁹⁴ Martin L. Cook, "Soldiering," *The Christian Century* 118, no. 20 (2001)., 25.
- ⁹⁵ SSgt Andrea Knudson, "General Jumper Commends CENTAF Airmen," *Maxwell-Gunter Dispatch*, March 11, 2005, 1A.
- ⁹⁶ Veith, *God at Work: Your Christian Vocation in All of Life*., 152.
- ⁹⁷ Ibid., 142.
- ⁹⁸ Ibid., 143.
- ⁹⁹ Ibid., 146-147.
- ¹⁰⁰ Meilaender, "Divine Summons," 1111.
- ¹⁰¹ Ibid., 1116.
- ¹⁰² Jeffries, "Work as a Calling," 36.
- ¹⁰³ Veith, *God at Work: Your Christian Vocation in All of Life*, 147.
- ¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 71.
- ¹⁰⁵ Matthews, "Is the Military Profession Legitimate?", 22.
- ¹⁰⁶ Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges, *The Servant Leader* (Nashville, TN: J Countryman, 2003), 21.
- ¹⁰⁷ Zacharski, "Why Do We Serve?", 2.
- ¹⁰⁸ Veith, *God at Work: Your Christian Vocation in All of Life*, 70.
- ¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 54.
- ¹¹⁰ Ibid.
- ¹¹¹ Prov 21:1, NIV.
- ¹¹² Ps 75: 6-7, NIV.
- ¹¹³ Veith, *God at Work: Your Christian Vocation in All of Life*, 151.

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